



LCS Level 3 Programme



2025 edition

Overview: The Level 3 Programme

The Programme leads to LCS Level 3 certification via the Approved Prior Learning & Experience route, which involves candidates submitting evidence that demonstrates their strategic level lean competency.

It is intended for senior managers who have developed an extensive knowledge and appreciation of lean thinking from their careers and who have considerable experience in implementing lean programmes and initiatives at a strategic and transformational level. It does not include formal teaching and offers candidates an enriching learning experience and personal development through critical reflection, research and analysis. The Programme can be completed virtually, though some support activity with the L3 Advisor can be face to face.



"I would absolutely recommend the Level 3 programme. Having completed Yellow, Green, and Black Belt training and delivered projects in that way, I found Level 3 to be much broader. It goes beyond project delivery to include the people side of improvement—focusing on behaviours, culture, and the skills needed to create lasting impact."

*Katie Holyoak
Continuous Improvement Business Partner -
Transformation at RS Group plc*

The Level 3 Qualification

The **LEVEL 3** qualification signals that the holder is a capable lean leader with a broad, mature understanding of lean thinking, which he or she can apply effectively at a strategic or transformational level.

Level 3: Strategic	
Level 3A	Strategic Enterprise
Level 3B	Strategic Supply Chain
Level 2: Technical	
Level 2A	Implementation & Design
Level 2B	Implementation & Leadership
Level 1: Fundamental	
Level 1A	Awareness
Level 1B	Diagnosis & Analysis
Level 1C	Improvement & Implementation

Benefits of the Level 3 Programme

Candidates will:

- ▶ Receive independent endorsement of their strategic capabilities and competency.
- ▶ Improve critical reflection and analysis capabilities.
- ▶ Enhance their understanding of lean thinking and its application.
- ▶ Develop a clear appreciation of lean leadership attributes.
- ▶ Strengthen their credibility as a senior lean thinker.
- ▶ Be able to use the third case to address a strategic imperative of their employer.
- ▶ Gain access to a network of professionals for continuing development and peer-to-peer learning.

Candidate Profile & Eligibility

Candidates should have:

- ▶ A broad knowledge of lean thinking gained through application, training, education or research.
- ▶ Been successful in applying lean thinking in varied environments, preferably in a variety of contexts, over the last ten years' in management roles.
- ▶ Experience in strategy development and deployment and lean/CI programme design and implementation.
- ▶ Demonstrable leadership capability and mentoring/coaching experience.

Routes to Level 3

A candidate has two options:

- ▶ Enrol on a programme managed directly by the LCS
- ▶ Enrol on a programme managed by an LCS Level 3 accredited consultancy

**Application Form submitted
to LCS or L3 Consultant**

LCS confirms application

**Candidate briefing & kick
off session**

**Timetable agreed—
submission starts**

Case studies x3

Assignment

**Cases & assignment
reviewed by LCS**

Panel presentation

**LCS confirms award,
certificate presented**



Submission Components

The submission components are an application form, three implementation case studies, an assignment and a presentation to an assessment panel.

Experience & Knowledge

An application form captures employment history, including the nature of roles held, key responsibilities and achievements, significant lean projects completed, scope of lean related experience, qualifications (academic/professional), education and training undertaken.

Case Studies

Three case studies demonstrating lean implementation at a strategic level. The candidate's role should have had strong leadership, planning and design aspects. Critical reflection, along with key personal learnings, are a feature of the case approach. There is an option for the third case to be a new project linked to the candidate's current role and thus an opportunity to address an initiative of strategic importance for the organisation that produces a clear benefit or return.

Assignment

A 4,000 word assignment on the development of lean thinking, covering current priorities and specific issues or opportunities, that demonstrates the depth and maturity of the candidate's lean knowledge and understanding. This involves a review of literature and features independent thinking and critical analysis.

Panel Presentation

The candidate delivers a presentation to an LCS panel of experts that draws together the conclusions of the cases and assignment, focusing on the implications for lean leadership and strategy development, as well as highlighting issues impacting the future of lean thinking.

Support & Guidance

Key features of the support provided by the LCS and Level 3 Advisor:

- ▶ Briefings introducing the different programme elements.
- ▶ Peer review of the candidate's output (in group situations).
- ▶ One-to-one support when producing the elements of the submission.
- ▶ Virtual collaboration and networking opportunities with the LCS community.
- ▶ Full documentation provided (eg templates, guides, articles, reports etc.).
- ▶ Access to a cloud based personal resource and collaboration area, plus discussion groups/forums.

Fee & More Information

Free guide from...

£4,900+VAT

10% discount for applicants from accredited organisations. Assignment exemption available for those with a relevant Masters degree.

Note that the fee depends on the level of support agreed with the L3 Advisor when undertaken through a consultancy.



Level 3a



Level 3b

Visit the L3 Programme web page www.leancompetency.org
Click on LCS Certification and then on Level 3 Programme.

The LCS Leadership Competencies

The submission components are an application form, three implementation case studies, an assignment and a presentation to an assessment panel.

- 1.** The ability to think in terms of processes, value streams and systems; knowing how to lead systems.
- 2.** The ability to problem solve, understand variability and waste.
- 3.** Understanding how we learn, develop and improve; leading learning & improvement.
- 4.** Understanding the behaviour of people.
- 5.** Giving vision, focus and direction to the organisation.



The LCS takes a systems approach to lean thinking and lean leadership and has suggested Five Personal Lean Competencies that represent the observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to being an effective lean leader and necessary for enhanced performance and organisational success.

The Level 3 Programme is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate they possess and are developing these competencies.



Certificate of Lean Competency

This is to certify that

Joe Bloggs

Has Demonstrated Competence in
Lean Thinking Knowledge & Practice

LCS Level 3a

Authorised
Catrin Archer

Head of Operations & Growth
Lean Competency System


Date: September 2025

Ref: 1234567

Level 3 Programme Overview


The submission components are an application form, three implementation case studies, an assignment and a presentation to an assessment panel.

The candidate discusses their suitability before formally submitting with their application 'Lean CV'. The candidate submits an application form to the LCS or to a Level 3 accredited consultancy. Once accepted, the LCS or the consultancy allocates a Level 3 Advisor to support the candidate in the production of their evidence portfolio.




The components of the portfolio are three transformational lean case studies and a 4,000 word assignment on lean thinking, covering its evolution and highlighting specific themes or challenges and completed with a presentation.

At least two cases should be drawn from the candidate's past experience, while there is an option for the third to be a new project linked to the candidate's current role. This is an opportunity for the candidate to address an initiative of strategic importance for his or her organisation that produces a clear benefit or return and also demonstrates their strategic capabilities.



The programme must be completed within 12 months of the kick-off meeting. It concludes with a presentation by the candidate to an LCS panel and the candidate's invitees of choice. The programme can be undertaken on an individual basis or can involve a group of candidates if circumstances allow.



Created by the LERC and licenced by Cardiff University

The LCS was created in 2005 by the Lean Enterprise Research Centre, Cardiff Business School, as a mechanism to promote and develop lean understanding and application in organisations. In 2014 a new company was launched to hold the Cardiff University LCS licence, with a remit to develop and promote the LCS.

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